

1941

FRENCH

78  
3446/G  
21 JAN 1941

Registry  
Number

92/17  
Z 446/446/G

Anglo-French relations August-December 1940.

FROM  
Foreign Office Minutes.

Copies of correspondence.

No.

Dated

Received  
in Registry

21st Jan.  
1941.

French.

Last Paper.

(Minutes.)

References.

(Print.)

(How disposed of.)

W.H. Anthony  
22/

W.B. 23/

Pl. see also Z444/G ~ Z445/G.

These three collections of papers have  
been printed for convenience of record.

A copy of each should be sent with  
our 'green' tels. to the country, if this  
has not already been done.

The three sections might be given sent  
to the first eleven persons on the attached  
list, which is, I understand, the  
usual automatic distribution for 'green'  
print. In view of the very secret  
nature

(Action  
completed.)

(Index.)

A

Next Paper.



nature of some of the documents,  
further distribution is perhaps undesirable.

R.L. Spearer  
23/1

W. Black  
25/1

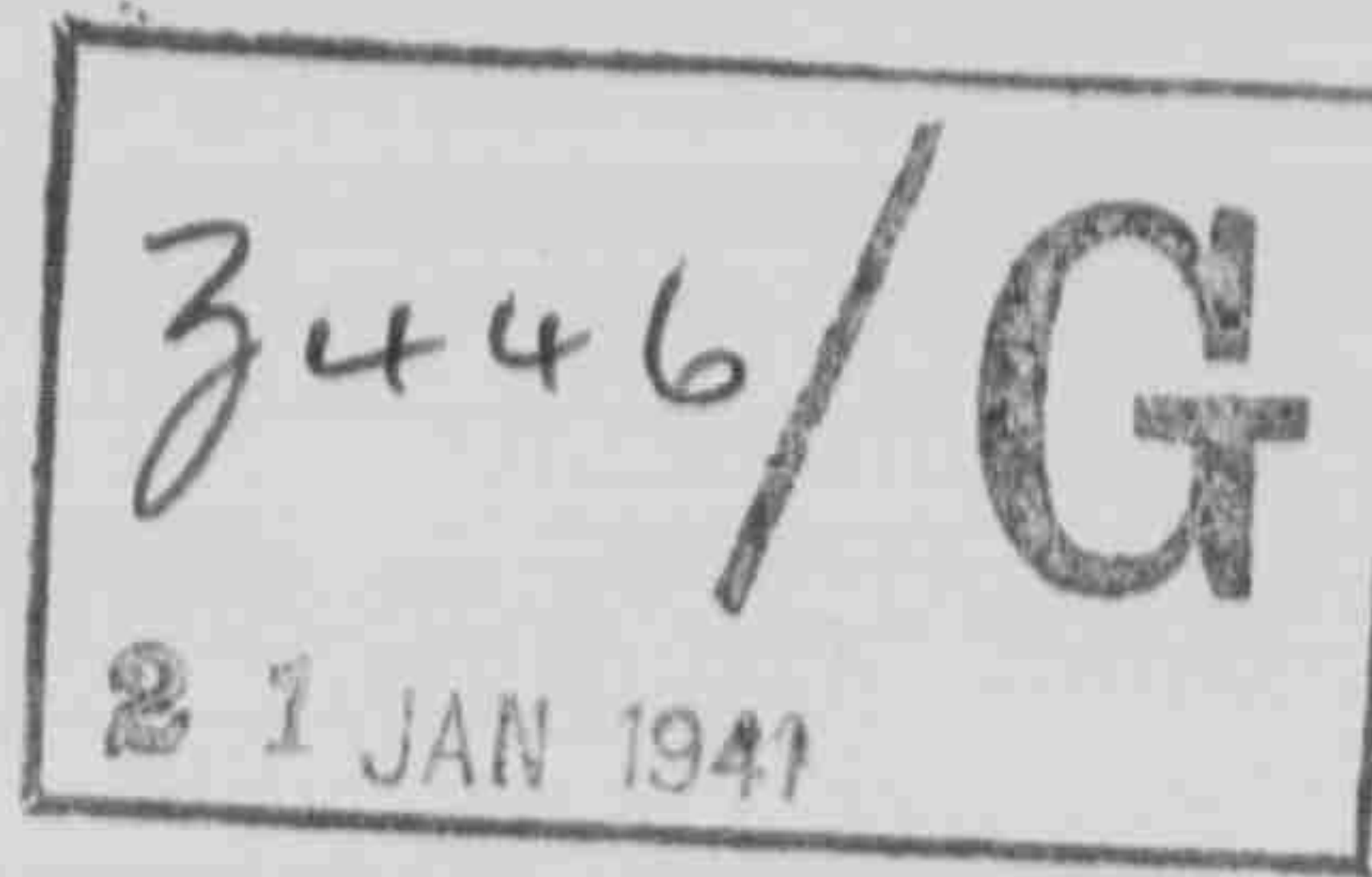
A useful collection. But here there  
these values for departmental use. No need to  
give them any <sup>initial</sup> ~~initial~~   
dist? as they are  
recapitulating.

W.S.  
26/1

W.S.  
26/1



SECRET.



Copy No. 8

TO BE KEPT UNDER LOCK AND KEY.

It is requested that special care may be taken to ensure the secrecy of this document.

ANGLO-FRENCH RELATIONS, AUGUST-DECEMBER 1940.

(1)

M. CHARTIER left with the Foreign Office on the 2nd August a note, of which the text is given below, protesting against the extension of the blockade to Metropolitan France and French North Africa. He explained that this document was communicated for information only, being an advance copy of a note which would be transmitted officially to His Majesty's Government through the United States Government, and that he was not empowered to discuss the questions raised in it. No communication was in fact ever received from the United States Government on this subject, and in consequence no reply was returned to the note. The attitude of His Majesty's Government regarding the blockade of France was, however, explained in the course of the Prime Minister's speech in the House of Commons on the 20th August (see "Germany" print series, August 20, section 1).

*Note left with the Foreign Office by M. Chartier.*

LE Ministre britannique de la Guerre économique a annoncé le 30 juillet à la Chambre des Communes que le Gouvernement britannique a décidé d'assimiler toute la France métropolitaine ainsi que l'Algérie, la Tunisie et le Maroc français aux territoires sous contrôle allemand en ce qui concerne la surveillance de la contrebande et des exportations à destination de l'ennemi.

Cette mesure ne saurait se justifier ni en droit ni en fait. Le Gouvernement français conserve en effet dans la zone non occupée, ainsi qu'en Algérie, en Tunisie et au Maroc, la plénitude de ses droits de souveraineté. Il en résulte que cette zone, comme nos possessions nord-africaines, se trouvent vis-à-vis des belligérants dans la même situation que des territoires neutres. Il n'est donc pas possible d'assimiler au point de vue du contrôle de la contrebande cette zone et ces possessions à des territoires comme la Belgique ou la Pologne où seules subsistent les autorités d'occupation allemandes.

Etant donné l'impérieuse nécessité où se trouve actuellement le Gouvernement français de pourvoir aussi bien dans la zone occupée que dans l'autre aux exigences d'une situation économique et notamment alimentaire chaque jour plus difficile, il importe d'organiser au bénéfice de ces zones un ravitaillement régulier des Français en produits originaires des possessions françaises et de quelques pays d'outre-mer non belligérants.

M. Dalton a indiqué dans sa déclaration du 30 juillet que le Gouvernement britannique a décidé d'étendre le système des navicerts à toutes les marchandises consignées à destination de tous les ports neutres européens. La France non occupée devant être considérée comme pays neutre, le système des navicerts devrait être appliqué aux navires qui se rendent dans ces ports libres. Pour faciliter l'application du système et donner au Gouvernement britannique l'assurance que les marchandises d'outre-mer importées en France non occupée ne serviront ni directement ni indirectement à l'Allemagne, le Gouvernement français serait disposé à fournir les garanties ci-après; celles-ci s'inspirent de



principes analogues à ceux qui permettent à la Grande-Bretagne d'autoriser actuellement le ravitaillement des pays balkaniques :

1. Création de syndicats d'importateurs qui seraient, à l'exclusion de tout autre organisme, habilités à effectuer les importations d'outre-mer dont le transport est soumis au contrôle britannique.

2. Ces syndicats donneraient des garanties établissant que les produits d'outre-mer importés en France seront exclusivement réservés à l'usage de la population française. Ces garanties affecteraient la forme de certificats. Ceux-ci, qui seraient visés par une autorité gouvernementale française, seraient transmis dans le pays d'exportation aux vendeurs, qui pourraient les communiquer aux représentants habilités pour la délivrance des navicerts.

Les garanties ci-dessus indiquées justifieraient en elles-mêmes l'octroi de la liberté de passage pour les marchandises d'outre-mer nécessaires à notre ravitaillement si la situation de la France ne présentait pas un caractère particulier du fait de l'existence de deux zones distinctes et du fait qu'aucun obstacle ne s'oppose au passage d'une marchandise de la zone non occupée dans la zone occupée. D'autre part, il ne paraît pas possible au Gouvernement français d'envisager un traitement différent en matière de ravitaillement des deux zones; des garanties spéciales doivent être prévues pour les marchandises d'outre-mer destinées à la consommation de la population civile de la zone occupée. Ces garanties seraient de deux sortes :

1. Le Gouvernement français demanderait au Gouvernement allemand de s'abstenir de toute réquisition sur les marchandises d'outre-mer importées en zone libre et transférées dans la zone occupée (cette assurance a déjà été obtenue à Wiesbaden pour les produits pétrolifères).

2. Les syndicats n'expédieraient en zone occupée les marchandises importées d'outre-mer en zone non occupée que pour répondre aux besoins immédiats de la consommation civile.

Le Gouvernement français serait disposé enfin à faire connaître le tonnage maximum de chaque catégorie de marchandises d'outre-mer indispensable pendant une période de temps déterminée au ravitaillement de notre pays.

En contre-partie de ces diverses garanties, le Gouvernement britannique nous donnerait l'assurance qu'il laissera librement passer vers les ports du territoire français non occupé les marchandises d'outre-mer pour lesquelles ces garanties auront été données.

*Londres, le 2 août 1940.*

---

(2)

*The Marquess of Lothian to Viscount Halifax.—(Received August 8.)*

(No. 1636.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Washington, August 7, 1940.*

THE French Ambassador has handed me copy of aide-mémoire handed by him on 6th August to the State Department, drawing attention to the problem of feeding France and putting forward scheme for tackling it. State Department is asked to submit proposals to you.

Text of aide-mémoire goes to you to-night under cover of my despatch No. 704.

---

(3)

*The Marquess of Lothian to Viscount Halifax.—(Received August 12.)*

(No. 704.)

HIS Majesty's Ambassador at Washington presents his compliments to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and, with reference to Washington telegram No. 1636 of the 7th August, has the honour to transmit



to him a copy of a note from the French Ambassador to the United States Secretary of State, dated the 6th August, 1940, regarding food supplies for France.

*Washington, August 7, 1940.*

Enclosure in (3).

*Copy of Note from the French Ambassador at Washington to the United States Secretary of State.*

L'AMBASSADEUR de France a l'honneur de faire connaître à son Excellence le Secrétaire d'État que la situation économique et notamment alimentaire, de jour en jour plus difficile, crée au Gouvernement français un devoir impérieux envers les populations de toutes les parties du territoire.

Le Gouvernement français, résolu à ne se soustraire, en aucun cas, à ce devoir, se propose d'organiser le ravitaillement régulier du territoire en produits originaires des possessions françaises et de quelques pays d'outre-mer non belligérants.

Il souhaite régler ce problème d'accord avec le Gouvernement britannique en demandant l'application du système des navicerts aux navires se rendant dans ses ports libres et en donnant, d'autre part, toutes garanties que les marchandises ainsi importées en territoire non occupé ne serviront ni directement, ni indirectement à l'Allemagne.

Ces garanties s'inspireraient de principes analogues à ceux qui permettent à la Grande-Bretagne d'autoriser actuellement le ravitaillement des pays balkaniques. Elles comporteraient essentiellement :

1. La création de syndicats d'importateurs qui seraient, à l'exclusion de tous autres organismes, habilités à effectuer les importations de produits d'outre-mer dont le transport est soumis au contrôle britannique.

2. L'établissement de certificats attestant que les produits d'outre-mer importés en France seront exclusivement réservés à l'usage de la population française. Ces certificats, visés par une autorité gouvernementale française, seraient transmis dans le pays d'exportation aux vendeurs, qui pourraient les communiquer aux services britanniques chargés de la délivrance des navicerts.

Les garanties qui précèdent semblent répondre à toutes exigences légitimes en ce qui concerne la France non occupée et l'Afrique du Nord française. Ces territoires, en effet, où le Gouvernement français conserve la plénitude de ses droits de souveraineté, se trouvent vis-à-vis des belligérants, en droit comme en fait, dans la même situation que des territoires neutres.

D'autre part, comme aucun obstacle ne s'oppose du fait de l'autorité française au passage d'une marchandise de la zone non occupée dans la zone occupée, le Gouvernement français offre, en ce qui concerne les marchandises d'outre-mer destinées à la consommation de la zone occupée, les garanties spéciales indiquées dans les deux paragraphes suivants.

3. Il demanderait au Gouvernement allemand de s'abstenir de toute réquisition sur les marchandises d'outre-mer importées en zone libre et transférées en zone occupée. (Cette assurance a déjà été obtenue à Wiesbaden pour les produits pétroliers.)

4. Les syndicats n'expédieraient en zone occupée les marchandises d'outre-mer importées en zone non occupée que pour répondre aux besoins immédiats de la consommation civile. Enfin,

5. Le Gouvernement français serait disposé à faire connaître le tonnage maximum de chaque catégorie de marchandises d'outre-mer indispensables pendant une période de temps déterminée au ravitaillement de notre pays.

En contre-partie de ces diverses garanties, le Gouvernement britannique donnerait au Gouvernement français l'assurance qu'il laisserait librement passer vers les ports du territoire français non occupé les marchandises d'outre-mer pour lesquelles ces garanties auraient été données.



D'ordre de son Gouvernement, l'Ambassadeur de France serait reconnaissant à son Excellence le Secrétaire d'État de bien vouloir transmettre au Gouvernement britannique, en les appuyant de sa haute autorité, ces propositions qui tendent à régler un problème dont l'importance est capitale pour le ravitaillement et pour l'existence même de la France.

M. de Saint-Quentin est heureux de saisir cette occasion pour renouveler à l'honorable Cordell Hull les assurances de sa très haute considération.

*Washington, le 6 août 1940.*

(4)

*Mr. Steel to Mr. Herschel V. Johnson (United States Embassy).*

*Foreign Office, August 22, 1940.*

WITH reference to our telephone conversation yesterday, I send you herewith a copy of the note about relief handed to the State Department by Saint-Quentin. You will, of course, treat this as a purely personal communication.

C. E. STEEL.

(5)

*Mr. Herschel V. Johnson to Mr. Steel (Foreign Office).*

*American Embassy,*

*London, August 24, 1940.*

Dear Steel,

THANK you for your note No. W 9151/8434/49, of the 22nd August, very kindly enclosing a copy of a note about relief which was given to the Department of State by the French Ambassador in Washington. The ambassador has asked me to thank you for your courtesy and to say that we will, of course, regard the paper as a purely personal communication.

Yours ever,

HERSCHEL JOHNSON.

(6)

*Sir Samuel Hoare to Viscount Halifax.—(Received September 12.)*

(No. 196. Saving.)

(Telegraphic.)

(Personal for Secretary of State.)

*Madrid, September 3, 1940.*

THE French Ambassador has this evening brought me a message from M. Baudouin that he desires me to transmit personally to you. M. Baudouin asks you seriously to consider the dangerous position that is being created in Africa by our encouragement of the De Gaulle movement against the Pétain Government. He is convinced that we shall not obtain any widespread support for a separatist movement, and that the inevitable result of such a movement, if it did succeed, would be to bring the Germans and Italians into Morocco. A further result would almost certainly be to involve Spain in the war.

2. I replied to this representation that as I was ignorant of the military position in French Morocco, I could not express an opinion, and in any case I could not do so until I had received your instructions. We had, however, to consider the position from several angles. Suppose, for instance, that the Pétain Government fell, it might be to our advantage to see a French Government set up in Morocco. The ambassador's comment was that the kind of Government that would be set up would not be at all to our liking. General Nogues, supposing that he formed the Government, was bitterly hostile to Great Britain, and had actually planned an attack upon Gibraltar by all the French Air Force in Morocco, and had only been stopped at the last minute by direct orders from



Pétain. If he formed a Government it would undoubtedly be hostile to us. It was inconceivable to the ambassador that the adherents of De Gaulle would be able to form a Government, and it was his convinced view that if they did the only result would be to bring the Germans and Italians in upon them and to be crushed almost immediately. Was it not to our advantage to keep the Germans and Italians out of Morocco? If they once got in, the Spaniards would almost certainly be drawn in against us as well. This would run directly contrary to the policy that I had been advocating here, namely, the exclusion of Spain from the war. Moreover, it was in the ambassador's view essential to heal rather than extend the breach between us and France with a view to our being firmly together in the later chapters of the war. Lastly, he emphasised the fact that the proposal for better relations came from M. Baudouin, who had previously been held to be a convinced Anglophobe.

3. I told the ambassador that without instructions from London it was impossible for me to express an opinion upon the general merits of the proposition. I could, however, say definitely from what I knew of my former colleagues in the Government that on no account would they abandon General de Gaulle, after having encouraged Frenchmen at great risk to themselves to join his forces. The ambassador told me that he fully understood the position and he felt sure that the Pétain Government would make no such request to us. His message concerned Africa and Africa alone. He believed that it was to our interest, as much as to the interest of the Pétain Government, to keep Morocco out of the war, and that being so, he asked us to discourage any further separatist movements in Africa. As for General de Gaulle and his adherents in England, that was our affair, and the French Government made no request to us to abandon them or to prevent their fighting in our ranks.

4. M. Baudouin requested me to ask for a reply as soon as possible.

(7)

*Sir S. Hoare to Viscount Halifax.*

(No. 398. Most Secret.)

My Lord,

*Madrid, September 6, 1940.*

WITH reference to my telegram No. 684 (*q.v.*) of the 1st September, I have the honour to transmit to you an interesting report from the naval attaché of a conversation with the French Naval Attaché who has recently returned from Vichy.

2. Your Lordship will observe that this report again raises the question of the future relations between His Majesty's Government and the Vichy Government, a subject on which I have already requested your instructions in my telegram under reference.

I have, &c.

S. HOARE.

Enclosure in (7).

*British Naval Attaché, Madrid, to His Majesty's Ambassador.*

(Most Secret.)

*September 5, 1940.*

THE French Naval Attaché has returned from Vichy. He saw Pétain, M. Baudouin, Darlan and others. He was instructed to keep in close contact with me, but carefully, because of German observation. This contact was important as there were so few ways of communicating quickly with London, and naval matters were very often urgent. He was also instructed by Admiral Darlan to tell me that the French navy, and, indeed, the French people, were only waiting for an opportunity to continue the war. I noticed a distinct change in Captain Delaye's attitude, which to a certain extent bore out what he was saying.

In addition to giving me some interesting scraps of information, which I have already passed on to the Admiralty, and promising me others, he delivered a message for your Excellency. It amounted to this:—

The Vichy Government is most anxious to retain contact with His Majesty's Government. The difficulties in the way of diplomatic representation should not, in the opinion of the Vichy Government, hinder the exchange of views. Although



recent speeches by the Prime Minister have made relations more than ever difficult, the Vichy Government realised that the true interests of France could only be served by maintaining contact with His Majesty's Government. It was their firm intention to observe the terms of the armistice as long as that was possible, as they considered that this was in the best interests of France, which needed a breathing-space in which to recover its courage. At the same time, the Vichy Government was not blind to German ambitions and designs. It was realised that no German promise was worth very much, and, as the French people recovered its spirits and passed from acute depression to indignation and hope, the time drew nearer when France could again take up arms. Nothing that had happened had made the French forget that Germany was the true enemy. Much, indeed, that was happening both in unoccupied and in occupied France now was helping to revive the spirit of resistance in Frenchmen. The German attacks on the Church and on the most cherished institutions of France were increasing. Although for the moment German interference in unoccupied France was very small, the effects of the German invasion in the rest of the country were not unknown to Marshal Pétain and his Ministers. In effect, France was waiting her opportunity. The brilliant British resistance—more successful than any Frenchman had anticipated—was inspiring France's policy. The Vichy Government hoped that the British Government would realise this and would also realise that it was impossible at the moment, in view of French weakness, for the Vichy Government to give open expression to its true desires. In order to preserve and, indeed, foster the growing spirit of resistance, it was essential for the Vichy Government to be able to feed its people. The unoccupied part of France was the poorest part, and, as a result of the influx of refugees, was now very overcrowded. Unless food came in from abroad, this winter would see terrible privations, famine and the death of hundreds of thousands.

While the Vichy Government could not make any official proposal to His Majesty's Government, they wished unofficially, but with full authority, to ask His Majesty's Government to consider the advisability, in the interests of both countries, of allowing some food ships to run the British blockade. They were not suggesting that convoys should pass openly to French ports, but that His Majesty's Government should be privately informed of occasions when a French ship from a French African port with a cargo of food supplies for, for instance, Marseilles would sail, and that the vessels of the blockade should deliberately ignore her. It was suggested that a secret arrangement of this kind would enable unoccupied France to avoid starvation and consequently anti-British feeling with its concomitant in greater German success at forming a pro-German party than German policy had so far achieved.

As all this was a message for His Majesty's Government through your Excellency, I contented myself with asking a few questions which brought out some of the points above mentioned, and making the rather obvious observation that food allowed to get through in such a manner would be seized by the Germans and would not assist the French in unoccupied France at all. This point Captain Delaye had obviously discussed with his superiors, as he replied that the seizure of the cargo of an ostensible blockade runner would be such a violent breach of the armistice terms that in the event of it taking place the Vichy Government would have no option but to withdraw to Africa and to consider the armistice at an end. This was, in fact, their firm intention should such a case arise. I remarked that I had heard that cargoes arriving at Marseilles now were seized at the port by German agents, and he replied that he had been informed in Vichy that there was no trade in Marseilles at all, and that no requisitioning of any kind had taken place in unoccupied France by German officials. The only German officials there were either in direct or indirect connexion with the Disarmament Commission, and were being hoodwinked right and left, as arms and munitions were being hidden and military formations were being given civilian guise. He again emphasised the advantages from the British point of view of winking at any blockade running of the kind indicated. He said that we should thereby retain the already partly recovered affection of the French people and at the same time counteract German manoeuvres, while the seizure of any cargo would automatically enable us to break the secret understanding and would bring the whole of North Africa and the French Government on our side again.

I have informed Captain Delaye that this message will be passed on in accordance with his Government's wishes, but that I cannot promise an immediate reply.



For your Excellency's guidance I feel bound to add an expression of opinion—I may say more of fact than of opinion—which should have some effect on His Majesty's Government when considering the proposal of the Vichy Government. This fact is that it is not physically possible for us to intercept every vessel sailing from a French African port for the south of France, at least at present. It must, therefore, be considered, if we come to reject the French proposal out of hand, whether we gain by declaring a blockade we cannot religiously maintain or not.

I asked Captain Delaye exactly who in the Vichy Government had sent this message to His Majesty's Government, and he replied Baudouin and Admiral Darlan, with the full knowledge and approval of Marshal Pétain, whom, of course, Captain Delaye knows well and whom he saw on this visit.

ALAN HILLGARTH,  
*Captain, R.N.*

(8)

*Viscount Halifax to Sir S. Hoare (Madrid).*

(No. 707.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, September 6, 1940.*

YOUR telegrams Nos. 684<sup>(1)</sup> and 685 [of 1st September: Relations with the Vichy Government].

We have carefully considered the French Government's communication, and we agree that discussions should continue between yourself and the French Ambassador.

2. We could not, however, agree without qualification to the French Government's demand in the last paragraph of their note that we should abstain from what they might choose to call "interference" with French overseas possessions. Several have already rallied to General de Gaulle, notably French Equatorial Africa, the French Cameroons, the New Hebrides and Oceania. The situation in Gaboon is not entirely clear, and a plebiscite is being taken in New Caledonia and also, it seems, in the Antilles. The decisions of these territories to join the Allied cause have been taken freely by the local authorities and the populations themselves, and it is natural that His Majesty's Government should do everything in their power to extend economic assistance to those territories which are prepared to assist in our war effort. Our economic policy in regard to the different French colonies must depend on the attitude of each individual colony to ourselves, and may therefore vary, but this can certainly not be stigmatised as "interference."

3. I hope that the above will be sufficient to enable you to play for time. We do not wish that the initiative in breaking off relations completely should come from us.

4. A despatch which will provide you with the necessary background for your conversations will reach you shortly.

<sup>(1)</sup> See "Documents relating to the position of General de Gaulle vis-à-vis His Majesty's Government, July–September 1940," No. 9.

(9)

*Viscount Halifax to Sir S. Hoare (Madrid).*

(No. 724. Personal.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, September 10, 1940.*

YOUR telegram No. 196 (*q.v.*), Saving [of the 3rd September: M. Baudouin's personal message about His Majesty's Government's encouragement of the de Gaulle movement in Africa].

I approve your language.

2. Please ask the French Ambassador to inform M. Baudouin that I have received his message with interest, and that it has been examined with all the attention due to any communication from our late Ally. You should go on to say that the movements which have already taken place in Africa are spontaneous



French affairs in their origin, which His Majesty's Government could not be expected to discourage. Moreover, His Majesty's Government have given certain undertakings to General de Gaulle, and, as you rightly pointed out, there can be no question of withdrawing from them. They have recognised General de Gaulle as the leader of all Free Frenchmen wherever they may be who rally to him in support of the Allied cause. They have promised economic advantages to those French territories which declare themselves for Free France. They have assumed responsibility for the defence of these territories from the sea. And His Majesty's Government have publicly expressed their determination, when victory has been gained by the Allied arms, to secure the full restoration of the independence and greatness of France.

---

(10)

*Sir S. Hoare to Viscount Halifax.—(Received September 14.)*

(No. 739.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Madrid, September 13, 1940.*

THE Moroccan position is becoming very serious. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Portuguese Ambassador are convinced that a de Gaulle *coup* there will immediately be followed by a German march through Spain. Suñer will make this possibility the centre of his talks in Berlin, and will try to create a situation in which he will pose as champion of Spanish rights in Morocco and the man who has obtained German help to satisfy them.

I am still awaiting your answer to my telegram No. 730<sup>(1)</sup> before giving message in your telegram No. 724 to the French Ambassador. I can only add that Morocco is now a point of extreme danger.

I am reporting in greater detail by bag.

(<sup>1</sup>) Not printed.

---

(11)

*Sir S. Hoare to Viscount Halifax.—(Received September 14.)*

(No. 740.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Madrid, September 13, 1940.*

MY immediately preceding telegram.

The French Ambassador has conveyed to me further message from Baudouin pressing for a colonial *modus vivendi*, but evidently wanting talks to continue. Ambassador told me that as a sign of French good faith and desire for better relations with us, Pétain [? group omitted] immediately to dismiss Laval.

Once more the ambassador insisted that Morocco was quite different to other French colonies.

Would you please instruct me urgently what should be the next step.

---

(12)

*Viscount Halifax to Sir S. Hoare (Madrid).*

(No. 747.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, September 15, 1940.*

YOUR telegrams Nos. 739 (*q.v.*) and 740 (*q.v.*) [of 13th September: M. Baudouin's desire for a colonial *modus vivendi*].

You may inform the French Ambassador that His Majesty's Government (see my telegram No. 744 (of 15th September)) are most anxious to avoid disorder in French Morocco, and that they will do nothing to promote it. The French Government will, of course, realise that it is impossible for His Majesty's Government either to go back on the promises which they have made to General



de Gaulle or to refrain from assisting any French overseas territories which may decide to follow his leadership and declare for Free France. Subject to these considerations, we should be glad to know what M. Baudouin has in mind when he speaks of a colonial *modus vivendi*.

2. Meanwhile, can naval attaché obtain from his French colleague any explanation of the mission of French warship to Casablanca and, as seems to be the case, beyond?

---

(13)

*Sir S. Hoare to Viscount Halifax.—(Received September 19.)*

(No. 761.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Madrid, September 19, 1940.*

YOUR telegram No. 724 (*q.v.*).

I gave the French Ambassador this morning the message contained therein, also the Chartier correspondence<sup>(1)</sup> for transmission to his Government. I prefaced the conversation by saying that we wished to keep Morocco quiet, but that we had no intention of repudiating our undertaking to de Gaulle. He was obviously pleased at the information about Morocco, and asked whether we could give a private hint to de Gaulle to hold off from there for the present. Has such a hint been given and, if not, would it be possible to give it?

<sup>(1)</sup> Printed "France," September 6, Section 1.

---

(14)

*Naval Attaché, Madrid, to the Director of Naval Intelligence.*

(Secret.)

(Telegraphic.)

*September 28, 1940.*

FRENCH Naval Attaché last night showed me signal from French Admiralty instructing him to ask me to pass official message Admiralty. This was just before news received signal my 2258 26th September.

He would not leave signal with me, but I made following translation, which he approved:—

"(1) Admiral, Gibraltar, confirming speech of Prime Minister, informed Admiral D'Harcourt on 14th July by consular channels that His Majesty's Government would not attack the French fleet in any French or colonial port. This was violated at Dakar.

"(2) His Majesty's Government has preferred to attack with her navy a French colony not occupied in lieu of attacking Germany, and so assumes a heavy responsibility.

"(3) The policy of His Majesty's Government seeks to promote revolution in France as much as in her colonies and can only result in bringing both empires to ruin.

"(4) The attack on Dakar was answered by bombardment of Gibraltar. We will continue to answer in the same way every new attack and we can make Mediterranean untenable for English, unless His Majesty's Government will formally engage:—"

My immediately following telegram.—2031/27.

---

(15)

*Naval Attaché, Madrid, to the Director of Naval Intelligence.*

(Secret.)

(Telegraphic.)

*September 28, 1940.*

MY immediately preceding telegram.

"(a) To suspend all attacks.

"(b) To renounce all propaganda for civil war.

"(c) Not to impede sea navigation (corrupt group) applicable to feeding."



I agreed to send, but gave him my private opinion of it very frankly. He replied that we were playing into hands of Laval, who is now completely German. His Majesty's Ambassador has seen this telegram. French Naval Attaché wishes to maintain contact with me.—2032/27.

(16)

*Sir S. Hoare to Viscount Halifax.—(Received October 1.)*

(No. 252. Secret. Saving.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Madrid, September 27, 1940.*

THE French Ambassador called upon me this afternoon with a message from the French Minister for Foreign Affairs. After expressing his consternation over the Dakar incident, he proceeded to say that he had not come with any message so forcible as that delivered last night by the French naval attaché to Captain Hillgarth, and secondly that he was chiefly interested in eradicating the anti-British feeling that was again bursting out in France, and in making it possible for France and Britain to continue on the same road towards an ultimate victory. I told him that, like him, I was only interested in winning the war and that on that account I was not going to recriminate with him over what had happened. For instance, I was not going to argue with him over the great resentment felt in Great Britain over the attacks upon Gibraltar or the firing upon the white flag at Dakar.

2. With this preface we arrived at M. Baudouin's message. It was to the effect that if the French Government was not to be driven entirely into German hands, Great Britain must allow supplies to pass from the French colonies to non-occupied France. If these supplies were allowed, the French Government would be prepared to accept any necessary supervision and would give a guarantee that neither the supplies or their equivalent in France would be seized by the Germans. If the Germans made an attempt to seize them, the French Government would be transferred to Morocco, and France would be once again united with us against Germany. The message contained in it no threat of the use of the French fleet against us if we refused to accept this proposal. The Ambassador did, however, say that certain sections of the army and the navy were so greatly excited over the Dakar incident that he could not answer for what they might do. Nor did the message contain any condition about stopping De Gaulle propaganda, unlike the message given to the naval attaché.

3. I told the ambassador that I would at once convey the message to London and put it to you as nearly as possible in his own words, and I would only make three comments upon it. Firstly, there were many who believed that the Germans intended to occupy the whole of France, and that this being so, we incurred great risk in permitting supplies to pass to France from the colonies. Secondly, British public opinion was convinced that M. Laval was determined to push France on to the German side. Upon this point the ambassador's comment was that the germanophiles had been swiftly losing ground until the Dakar incident. Thirdly, the ambassador and I were bent upon the same objective, namely, the defeat of Germany and all the events during the war must be subordinated to this end.

4. The ambassador was in a pleading mood, and I was struck by the sincerity of a man who fought all through the last war and who has suffered crushing family bereavements in this war. I should be grateful if you could instruct me as soon as possible as to the lines of the answer that I should give him.

(17)

*Viscount Halifax to Sir S. Hoare (Madrid).*

(No. 824.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, October 3, 1940.*

YOUR telegram No. 252, Saving, (q.v.) [of 27th September: Message from M. Baudouin].



You are authorised to give the following message to the French Ambassador :—

*Begins:* 1. His Majesty's Government are, and always have been, prepared to enter into discussions with the French Government at Vichy with a view to avoiding misunderstandings and friction. When M. Baudouin sent a message through M. La Baume suggesting a *modus vivendi* regarding the French Colonial Empire, I replied at once with a request to be told in greater detail what M. Baudouin had in mind. No answer was received, and since then the French forts and French ships at Dakar have fired on the British war vessels when invited to parley, and French aircraft have bombed Gibraltar without warning. In spite of these hostile acts, His Majesty's Government are still ready to enter into talks with the French Government. But three points must be made clear from the outset :—

- (a) Should French armed forces again attack British vessels or British territory, such as Gibraltar, His Majesty's Government will immediately retaliate with all their force against French colonial ports and territory.
- (b) Any discussions with the French Government must be within the framework of the message you have received from the French Ambassador and *not* be based on the previous message received on 26th September by your naval attaché from his French colleague.
- (c) It must be understood that His Majesty's Government cannot withdraw their support of General de Gaulle's movement, and must give him such support as he requires to maintain his authority in those French colonies which rally to his cause.

2. Subject to these conditions, the discussions which His Majesty's Government contemplate would turn on the following three questions :—

- (a) How to ensure to the satisfaction of His Majesty's Government that that part of the French Colonial Empire not now or hereafter controlled by General de Gaulle does not fall under German or Italian influence. (In this connexion you could repeat to the French Ambassador assurance that we have repeatedly made public of our intention after the war to see the greatness and independence of France restored. This, of course, covers any territories that may spontaneously in meanwhile join General de Gaulle.)
- (b) If the French Government can furnish adequate assurances on the above point, His Majesty's Government would be prepared to study any proposals which the French Government may wish to make regarding the possibility of some trade exchanges between French colonies and unoccupied France.
- (c) How to ensure that ships of the French navy can in no circumstances fall into German or Italian hands.

3. It should be made clear that His Majesty's Government attach the utmost importance to their blockade weapon, which they must continue to employ to the full against the enemy. They could only contemplate any relaxation if absolutely satisfied that the French Government are able and willing as regards their overseas territories to act independently of German or Italian dictation, and are, moreover, ready to adopt a more co-operative attitude than they have hitherto shown in their dealings with His Majesty's Government. *Ends.*

4. Meanwhile, for your own secret information, you should know that His Majesty's ships have orders to stop all French ships, both warships and merchantmen, who attempt to proceed to French occupied ports and all unescorted merchant ships proceeding to French unoccupied or African ports. On the other hand, His Majesty's ships for the present are acquiescing in the passage of French merchant vessels from African ports to French Mediterranean ports when under naval convoy.



(18)

*Viscount Halifax to Sir S. Hoare (Madrid).*(No. 854.)  
(Telegraphic.)*Foreign Office, October 7, 1940.*MY telegram No. 824 (*q.v.*) [of 3rd October : Reply to M. Baudouin].

Please inform French Ambassador that His Majesty's Government must ask Vichy Government to give their reply without undue delay. If any arrangement can be reached it is most desirable that that should be done at an early date, and you should emphasise this to your French colleague by making it clear to him that, pending the issue of suggested discussion, His Majesty's Government must maintain all their rights of blockade, including that of stoppage of trade to and from West African ports.

---

(19)

*Viscount Halifax to Sir S. Hoare (Madrid).*(No. 877.)  
(Telegraphic.)*Foreign Office, October 11, 1940.*

INFORMATION received that French cruiser *Primaquet* has left Casablanca for Dakar in escort of French merchant vessel loaded with torpedoes and shells. We are, as you know, prepared to enter into immediate discussion with French Government for a general arrangement and *modus vivendi*, and we agreed to these talks on the basis of the position then existing. We have no intention, while these discussions are proceeding, of taking any aggressive action against Dakar or of attempting to alter Dakar situation. We have also, as you know, formally told the French Government that we must, pending the issue of these discussions, maintain our full rights of blockade.

2. We cannot therefore be expected to acquiesce in any French action altering the military situation, if our information is well founded, while we on our side are abstaining from any such action pending discussions.

3. We would therefore ask that immediate orders be given by French Government to *Primaquet* and to escorted vessel to return to Casablanca pending issue of proposed discussions.

4. Please ask French Ambassador to convey foregoing to his Government for their urgent consideration.

For your private information. Orders are issuing to His Majesty's ships to prevent *Primaquet* getting to Dakar. They will postpone action as long as possible in hopes that French Government may order recall themselves.

---

(20)

*Sir S. Hoare to Viscount Halifax.—(Received October 12.)*(No. 856.)  
(Telegraphic.)*Madrid, October 12, 1940.*YOUR telegram No. 877 (*q.v.*).

Minister in my absence conveyed message to the French Ambassador this morning. He agreed to telegraph immediately to Vichy as requested, but expressed grave misgivings as to the effect the message would have upon the French Government and in particular upon Admiral Darlan.

He claimed that it had not previously been made clear that His Majesty's Government agreed to start the talks on basis of existing situation, and that it was illogical at one moment to expect the French Government to prevent its Colonial Empire from falling under German or Italian influence and at the next to say it must not take necessary military measures. Minister maintained that it was reasonable and natural in the existing circumstances to expect no alteration of the military situation, but he was not to be shaken.

---



*Sir S. Hoare to Viscount Halifax.—(Received October 15.)*

(No. 862.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Madrid, October 14, 1940.*

MY telegram 840.<sup>(1)</sup>

Following is summary of the French reply. Text follows by bag to-morrow:—

*Begins:* French Government welcome British overtures<sup>(2)</sup> calculated to put an end to acts of hostility which France suffered. The French Government make the following observation on the three British conditions:—

- (a) France never has been and never will be [an] aggressor, and is at a loss to understand the British threats in the event of French aggression. French Government must clearly inform the British Government that they will reply with all their forces against any further British attacks on French ships or territory or any British support of military action against these ships or territory.
- (b) French Government agree that conversations might profitably be developed, ultimately, within the sphere of my discussions with the French Ambassador on 27th September.
- (c) The French Government recognise neither the "cause" nor "authority" of de Gaulle. There is only one French Government charged with the defence of the French Empire and the eventual restoration of integrity against all violence. Recognition of any other authority or support of attempts to seduce French possessions from the authority of the French Government would deprive of the necessary basis any attempt at reconciliation. But as the British Government shares the French Government's desire for a *détente*, the former's policy must be compatible with the honour, dignity and interests of France.

The French Government would point out that before the British memorandum was received, they had publicly and repeatedly declared their determination to retain control of their Colonial Empire and fleet. They have taken steps to ensure the respect of rights in this connexion recognised by the armistice.

The French Government earnestly desire the establishment of a commercial *modus vivendi* as regards trade between France and Colonies.

In conclusion, the French Government cannot accept the British interpretation of their attitude and consider themselves the offended party. They hope, however, to reap the fruits of their policy of patience from which they had departed only recently and with regret. *Ends.*

Door is thus at least left open.

<sup>(1)</sup> Not printed.

<sup>(2)</sup> In point of fact the "overtures" came from the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs and not from His Majesty's Government (see Madrid telegram No. 252, Saving, of September 27.)

*Sir S. Hoare to Viscount Halifax.*

(No. 457.)

HIS Majesty's Ambassador at Madrid presents his compliments to His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State, and, with reference to Madrid telegram No. 862 (*q.v.*) of the 14th October, 1940, has the honour to transmit to him a copy of a translation of note from French Ambassador to His Majesty's Ambassador, dated the 14th October, 1940.—Reply to Lord Halifax's message of the 5th October, 1940, to the French Government.

*Madrid, October 15, 1940.*



Enclosure in (22).

*French Ambassador at Madrid to His Majesty's Ambassador.*

Mon cher Ambassadeur et Ami,

Madrid, le 14 octobre 1940.

A LA date du 5 octobre, votre Excellence avait bien voulu me communiquer un message de Lord Halifax se référant à des conversations que nous avons eues précédemment ensemble.

J'ai l'honneur de transmettre ci-après à votre Excellence la réponse du Gouvernement français au message précité :

“ Le Gouvernement français accueille avec faveur les ouvertures du Gouvernement anglais tendant à mettre un terme aux actes hostiles dont l'Empire et la flotte française ont été l'objet ou la victime.

“ Les trois conditions préalablement posées par le Gouvernement britannique à la reprise de relations correctes avec le Gouvernement français appellent de sa part les observations suivantes :

“ (a) Le Gouvernement français n'a jamais pris l'initiative d'attaques contre des navires ou des territoires britanniques. Les opérations qui ont eu lieu—où qu'elles se soient déroulées—ont toujours procédé d'initiatives anglaises, dont le Gouvernement français a toujours cherché limiter les conséquences.

“ Le Gouvernement français ne songe pas à se transformer en agresseur. Aussi ne peut-il s'expliquer pourquoi le Gouvernement britannique le menace de recourir avec toutes ses forces—dans le cas d'une agression—à des mesures de représailles contre les ports et les territoires coloniaux français. Pour sa part il doit déclarer nettement au Gouvernement britannique qu'il n'hésitera pas à riposter avec tous ses moyens si des forces armées britanniques renouvèlaient leur attaque contre des navires français ou des territoires français, ou encore soutenaient une action militaire contre ses navires ou ses territoires.

“ (b) Le Gouvernement français estime, comme le Gouvernement britannique, que les conversations éventuelles pourraient utilement se développer dans le cadre des entretiens qui ont eu lieu le 27 septembre entre M. de la Baume et Sir Samuel Hoare.

“ (c) Le message de Lord Halifax précise que le Gouvernement britannique ne peut retirer son appui à M. de Gaulle—si celui-ci le réclame—pour ‘maintenir son autorité dans les colonies françaises qui se rallient à sa cause.’ Le Gouvernement français ne reconnaît ni la cause ni l'autorité de M. de Gaulle.

“ Il n'existe qu'un Gouvernement français, dont l'autorité s'étend à tous les territoires coloniaux français et qui a pour strict devoir de défendre l'Empire français, d'en faire respecter et, éventuellement, d'en restaurer l'intégrité contre toute violence. Si le Gouvernement britannique prétendait reconnaître un autre pouvoir que celui du Gouvernement français sur des possessions françaises, ou accorder son appui à des entreprises ayant pour contribution de soustraire les possessions françaises à l'autorité légitime du Gouvernement français, il priverait de sa base nécessaire tout effort tendant à un apaisement entre les deux pays.

“ Mais, puisque le Gouvernement britannique désire—comme le Gouvernement français—une détente, sa politique doit être compatible avec l'honneur, la dignité et les intérêts de la France.

“ Quant à l'autre question, dont l'examen est subordonné au règlement préalable des trois conditions précitées, le Gouvernement français désire, dès maintenant, faire remarquer, qu'il n'a pas attendu le mémorandum britannique pour affirmer publiquement, à maintes reprises, sa volonté de conserver la maîtrise de son empire colonial et la propriété de sa flotte, désarmée ou non. Ces droits lui sont reconnus par les Conventions d'Armistice et il a pris les précautions nécessaires pour qu'ils soient respectés.

“ Enfin, le Gouvernement français déclare qu'il a le vif désir de contribuer à l'établissement d'un *modus vivendi* acceptable par les deux Gouvernements concernant le régime des échanges commerciaux entre les colonies françaises et la métropole, car, de la solution de cette question dépendent la vie et la santé d'un grand nombre d'hommes, de femmes et d'enfants français.



“ Si désireux qu’il soit de ne pas revenir sur des événements qu’il déplore, pour ne plus songer qu’à une détente qu’il souhaite, le Gouvernement français ne peut cependant se dispenser de contester l’appréciation que porte Lord Halifax sur son attitude passée à l’égard de la Grande-Bretagne.

“ Il se croit, en effet, beaucoup plus fondé que le Gouvernement britannique à se plaindre du cours qu’ont pris les relations franco-anglaises.

“ Le Gouvernement français a longtemps supporté passivement les actes d’hostilité de la flotte britannique. Il nourrissait, et il nourrit encore, l’espoir de recueillir les fruits d’une longue patience, dont il ne s’est départi récemment qu’à regret.”

Je vous prie, &c.

R. DE LA BAUME.

(23)

*Viscount Halifax to Sir S. Hoare (Madrid).*

(No. 906.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, October 19, 1940.*

YOUR telegram No. 862<sup>(1)</sup> [of 14th October : M. Baudouin’s reply].

1. I am disagreeably impressed with the French Government’s reply, though I confess I had not expected anything very different. It does, however, emerge that they do not want to break with us, and we should be glad to extract what we can from that situation.

2. Please speak to the French Ambassador on the following lines :—

3. Although His Majesty’s Government are disappointed with the general tenor of the reply, they are none the less prepared to continue the discussion within the limits laid down and upon the conditions stated in their last communication.

4. They would once again remind the French Government that their constant purpose has been and still is to secure the full restoration of the independence and greatness of France. They inflexibly reject all enemy suggestions of which they have had notice to make a peace in which Germany and Italy would be paid off out of the territories of France. It is for this reason and because our own vital military interests demand it that we have taken and must take every step in our power to ensure that the French Colonial Empire and the French Fleet do not fall into the hands of our enemies. It is because in present circumstances the French Government are plainly incapable of safeguarding their overseas territories that we have welcomed and supported—and must continue to welcome and support—any movement in French overseas territories for self-defence against German or Italian attack or infiltration, and for collaboration with ourselves.

5. A second point on which the French Government must have no illusions is that, except to such extent as may be agreed in discussion, His Majesty’s Government must maintain the blockade, which is vital to their war effort.

6. We are happy to note the French Government’s determination to retain control of their Colonial Empire and Fleet, and we assume that this means that neither will be allowed to fall under German or Italian influence or into German or Italian hands. If the French Government can convince us that they both intend and are able to make this purpose effective, there should be no fundamental difference between ourselves and them, since we look forward to the ultimate unity of France and her Empire when victory has been achieved. We feel pretty sure that victory will be achieved.

7. His Majesty’s Government are glad to note that France will never be an aggressor, but they feel bound to make it clear that, if any attack were to be made upon British territory, harbours, or ships of war, they would immediately take the strongest reprisals against targets in unoccupied France, and you may add, in course of conversation, that even the seat of the Government itself would not necessarily be immune.

8. If the above points are clearly understood on the French side, His Majesty’s Government are willing that discussions should begin at once at Madrid. We would suggest that the question of trade between North Africa

<sup>(1)</sup> Not printed. Summarises reply of which full text is enclosed in Madrid despatch No. 457 of the 15th October (q.v.).



(including the Atlantic ports of French Morocco) and ports in unoccupied France should be first reviewed, and we would be glad to examine any concrete proposals which the French Government may wish to put forward.

9. For your own information. We think it well to pursue this exchange of views with the Vichy Government in the hope that they will find it to their interest to reach an accommodation with us. We realise that they are under the German heel and they cannot be regarded as free agents in anything that they do. We can hardly expect to receive binding assurances in writing from them which would not be approved by the Germans, and they have so far given us little ground for confidence in any oral assurances they may give us. But there is no other basis on which we can proceed, given the position in which they find themselves. The one safeguard we have is that if they go back on their undertakings we can regard any arrangement we make with them as void and withdraw any advantages we have accorded to them.

10. The foregoing was drafted on the basis of the summary of the French Government's reply contained in your telegram under reference, the full text not having yet arrived. Unless, however, the foregoing instructions require modification by reason of some point in the full text of the French communication not covered by the summary, you should act on them forthwith.

---

(24)

*Viscount Halifax to Sir S. Hoare (Madrid).*

(No. 935. Secret.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, October 25, 1940.*

MY telegram No. 933 [of 25th October: Message for Marshal Pétain].

Please convey to your French colleague following message from His Majesty The King to Marshal Pétain:—

“ M. le Maréchal,

“ At this serious juncture in the life of the British and French peoples, I send you a message of goodwill. The armistice which you were forced to make with the common enemy and his occupation of so many French ports and aerodromes for the attack on my country have been a very grievous addition to the burdens which my people have to bear. Nevertheless, these tragic events have not weakened in British hearts the sympathy and sense of comradeship which have grown up over many years of peace and war between the British and French nations. We are resolved to fight on to the end, and we are sure that the end will be a complete British victory over Hitler and his régime. We have solemnly declared that our victory will carry with it the restoration of the freedom and greatness of France.

“ Reports are reaching me of an attempt by the German Government to secure from you undertakings that would go far beyond the terms accepted by you at the time of the armistice. I recall that then you expressed your determination to accept no terms dishonouring to the name of France. I am confident that now also you will reject proposals that would bring dishonour to France and grave damage to a late Ally. The disaster that overwhelmed France deprived us of her assistance, but it would indeed be a sombre event in history if France were to range herself against us and afford direct assistance to our enemy. I do not doubt that, in refusing any such proposals that may have been made, you will carry with you the overwhelming assent of all those among both our peoples, and in other countries, who have put their faith in your honour as a soldier and who see in a British victory their hope of the salvation of France.”

(Repeated to Washington, No. 2791.)

---



*Mr. Butler to Viscount Halifax.—(Received October 26.)*

(No. 2413. Secret.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Washington, October 25, 1940.*

MY immediately preceding telegram (*q.v.*).

President suggested that I should get substance of what was said to French Ambassador yesterday from Mr. Sumner Welles, and I saw the latter immediately after at the State Department. President had already given him Prime Minister's new message.

Mr. Welles told me that he had made very strong representations to the ambassador on 23rd October to the effect that any agreement made by his Government which would assist Germany against the British Empire or put the French fleet into service against the British Empire would have an effect on the American Government and people which would be absolutely fatal.

Yesterday evening he had given the ambassador a personal message for Pétain from the President. The general purport was that the United States Government could not regard a plea of duress or helplessness as a prisoner of war as any justification of the country serving its conqueror in operations against its former Ally. Message recalled the solemn assurances given by Marshal Pétain's Government when it was first formed, and said that such assistance to Germany would constitute a flagrant and deliberate breach of these assurances rather than any such agreement between France and Germany, and end once and for all France's traditional friendship with America and any chance of American help being given her. An agreement would create a wave of indignation, and the United States would make no effort at appropriate opportunity to ensure return to France of her overseas possessions.

Mr. Welles told me that full substance of his remarks to the French Ambassador had been telegraphed to the United States Embassy, London, last night and that you would already have had them. French Ambassador had told Mr. Welles that he had tried to telephone them to Vichy, but, having failed in this, had sent them in an urgent telegram (see my telegram No. 2407<sup>(1)</sup>).

(<sup>1</sup>) Not printed.

*Viscount Halifax to Sir S. Hoare (Madrid).*

(No. 971.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, November 1, 1940.*

WE are becoming disturbed at the situation which is being created for us by the continuation of the indeterminate state of the negotiations which are apparently now proceeding between France and Germany, in particular by the description of them given by Marshal Pétain in his broadcast on 30th October. According to the marshal the principles of collaboration between the two countries have been accepted, while the application will be discussed later. There is nothing to show what price the French are to pay for the alleviations which they hope to obtain in respect of the prisoners, the expenses of occupation, the line of demarcation and the provisioning of unoccupied France. From our point of view it might, indeed, have been better if the marshal had either accepted the most humiliating terms from Germany, in which event the French people might have thrown out their Government, and the French Empire might have rallied, or, alternatively, if he had rejected Herr Hitler's terms. As things are we seem to be getting the worst of both worlds. On the one hand there is no revulsion of feeling in France on account of the enormity of the terms imposed. On the other we are hesitating, in view of the uncertainty of the position, to undertake measures which we should otherwise put in hand to strengthen de Gaulle's position and to bring increased economic pressure to bear upon those parts of the French Empire which remain faithful to Vichy. The collaboration with Germany which the marshal contemplates may, indeed, be represented as being political and economic only, but how can we be assured that military collaboration is excluded?



2. We feel, therefore, that the time has come to ask the Vichy Government where it stands, and I shall be glad if you will approach your French colleague accordingly.

3. The approach might be on the following lines :—

4. At M. Baudouin's suggestion we have embarked on an exchange of views with the Vichy Government with the object of seeing whether some *modus vivendi* could not be reached in the economic sphere in return for adequate guarantees from the Vichy Government that French territory, ships and bases should not fall into enemy hands or be used for operations against us. It is now nearly a fortnight since we sent our last communication to the Vichy Government (my telegram No. 906 (*q.v.*) [of 19th October] ), and to this we have had no reply.

5. On the other hand, the French Government have apparently meanwhile entered into negotiations with the German Government on matters which, if current reports are to be believed, must directly affect our own security and the conduct of the war. Reliable information as to what has passed between the French and Germans is lacking. All that we have are certain vague communiqués issued by the Vichy Government, together with Marshal Pétain's broadcast of 30th October. In addition the Vichy Government have apparently (see your telegram No. 933<sup>(1)</sup> [of 30th October]) informed their representative in North Africa that most of the rumours circulated in the foreign press and wireless about the preliminaries of peace between France and Germany are without foundation, while the press in Morocco (Tangier telegram No. 607<sup>(1)</sup> [of 30th October] ) publishes this denial, and reports that General Weygand has addressed a message to General Nogues warning the people of French Africa against these reports and adding that nothing contrary to the honour and interests of France and her peoples has been, or could be, agreed to by a Government headed by Marshal Pétain.

6. We have ourselves received no communication on this matter from the Vichy Government, and we feel that we are entitled to ask them to make their position clear to us without delay and let us know what it is they have agreed to with the Germans. It would not be enough, for example, for them to protest that they are not going to allow the enemy the use of their bases. What we want is to be able, on the basis of information as to the Franco-German agreement, to estimate what guarantee we have that the enemy will not directly or indirectly succeed in creating a position where they can take them for themselves. It is, after all, only because this country is standing up that the French are in a position to make any sort of bargain with the Germans.

7. It would do no harm if you took occasion to repeat that, if they force us into hostilities and make any attack upon us, we should immediately take reprisals against unoccupied France, and that even the seat of the Government itself would not necessarily be immune (paragraph 7 of my telegram No. 906) (*q.v.*).

8. You will have seen from my telegram No. 958<sup>(1)</sup> that we have been in touch with M. Rougier, who came to this country with the knowledge and approval of Marshal Pétain, and that we hope that he will represent our views and his own reflexions strongly to General Weygand and to the Vichy Government. I am sending you, in a later telegram, an account of the line which M. Rougier told us that he proposes to take with General Weygand.

(Repeated to Washington, No. 2899, and Tangier, No. 290.)

(<sup>1</sup>) Not printed.

---

(27)

*French Ambassador at Madrid to His Majesty's Ambassador.*

*Madrid, le 2 novembre 1940.*

LE message ci-après a été reçu de M. le Maréchal Pétain à l'adresse de Sa Majesté le Roi d'Angleterre :

“ Sire,

“ Le message de votre Majesté a retenu toute mon attention.

“ Le peuple français, après avoir lutté aux côtés du peuple britannique, a ressenti profondément les agressions dont notre pays a été l'objet à plusieurs reprises de la part de la flotte britannique ainsi que le concours



que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté apporte à des Français rebelles à leur patrie. Sans se départir de son calme, le Gouvernement français a cherché à éviter tout ce qui aurait pu aggraver la situation. Il ne se livrera, pour sa part, à aucune attaque injustifiée; mais, conscient de ses devoirs, il saura faire respecter dans l'honneur les intérêts essentiels de la nation française.

"En raison des liens qui unissaient nos deux pays, c'est avec une grande douleur que je me vois obligé de parler à votre Majesté avec cette franchise; c'est en tout cas, à mon sens, le moyen le plus sûr d'appeler toute Sa haute attention sur un état de choses dont le Gouvernement français ne porte aucune responsabilité.—PÉTAIN."

N.B.—For translation, see Madrid telegram No. 334, Saving (*q.v.*).

(28)

*Sir S. Hoare to Viscount Halifax.—(Received November 6.)*

(No. 334. Saving.)

(Telegraphic.) *En clair.*

*Madrid, November 2, 1940.*

THE following reply was handed to me this morning by French Ambassador. Ambassador expects shortly further replies to President and Prime Minister. He asks me to say that disappointing character of reply is due to fear of Germans and that the solid fact to be taken into account is growing anti-German feeling in France.

He is still convinced, after talks with French official just arrived from Vichy, that Pétain has entered into no commitments with Hitler:—

"Sire,

"Your Majesty's message has received my full attention.

"The French people, after having fought side by side with the British people, have felt deeply the aggressions which our country has suffered on several occasions at the hands of the British fleet, and also the support given by His Majesty's Government to those Frenchmen who are rebels to their country. Without losing their calm, the French Government has sought to avoid any action which could have aggravated the situation. On their part, they will not make any unjustified attack; but, conscious of their duty, they will know how honourably to respect the essential interests of the French nation.

"On account of the ties uniting our two countries, it is with great regret that I see myself obliged to address your Majesty with this frankness, but it is nevertheless, in my view, the surest method of drawing your Majesty's attention to a state of affairs for which the French Government bears no responsibility.—PÉTAIN."

(29)

*Viscount Halifax to Sir S. Hoare (Madrid).*

(No. 986.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, November 3, 1940.*

THERE are indications that the French Government may have it in mind to move the *Jean Bart* and the *Richelieu* from Casablanca and Dakar respectively to Toulon or some other port where they could be repaired and completed. We should regard it as of vital importance to prevent this, and we think that it would be wise to put in a word of warning at Vichy without further delay.

2. Please, therefore, broach the matter with your French colleague, or, if you prefer, instruct your naval attaché to broach it with the French Naval Attaché.

3. The line to take might be as follows: His Majesty's Government have received reports, the authenticity of which they have no means of judging, that the *Richelieu* and the *Jean Bart* are to be moved to other French ports for repair and completion. Such a step would immediately and greatly increase the temptation to the Germans and Italians to lay their hands on the French fleet.



4. French Government will understand that it is not their good faith that is in doubt, but their physical ability in certain circumstances to prevent these ships falling into German hands. That is a risk that cannot be met by any assurances from the French Government, who, through the disasters that have overtaken them, are in a position where they may be unable to implement such assurances.

5. His Majesty's Government would particularly wish to avoid any clash between British and French naval forces, and we therefore earnestly hope that, if the French Government have any intention of moving these two ships for this purpose, they will refrain from putting it into effect.

---

(30)

*Sir S. Hoare to Viscount Halifax.—(Received November 5.)*

(No. 958.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Madrid, November 4, 1940.*

YOUR telegram No. 971 (*q.v.*).

I saw French Ambassador this afternoon and handed to him an aide-mémoire containing points made in your first six paragraphs. I found him greatly depressed. He has heard nothing from Vichy but has come to the conclusion that Laval's intention is to sign a peace on 11th November and, with the approval of the German Government, to use the French fleet and certain military units for recovering the French colonies that have declared for de Gaulle. Ambassador thinks that Pétain's reply to The King leaves open this possibility and would not conflict with [two groups undecypherable] his [?statement] saying that French fleet will not attack the British fleet. If the two fleets came into conflict, Laval would claim that it was an act of aggression by the British fleet preventing French restoring order in their own empire. Ambassador therefore regards plan as not only very mean, but very clever. He agreed with me that if it was carried it would undoubtedly mean war between Great Britain and Vichy. It was at this stage that I added reference to paragraph 7 of your telegram under reference and said that such a situation would mean the bombing of unoccupied France, including Vichy. He did not demur. We agreed that the only thing that he could do at the moment was urgently to telegraph substance of my communication and to ask for an immediate answer.

---

(31)

*Mr. Butler to Viscount Halifax.—(Received November 5.)*

(No. 2542.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Washington, November 4, 1940.*

MY telegram No. 2528.<sup>(1)</sup>

Mr. Welles showed me to-day Marshal Pétain's reply to the President's message just received from the United States Chargé d'Affaires at Vichy with latter's comments on it. He was about to receive formal reply from the French Ambassador.

Reply dated 1st November was brief. It contained the following points:—

French Government:—

- (1) Would refrain from answering certain points in the President's message which might have led them to question the fairness of attitude of the United States Government.
- (2) Would preserve their full liberty of action.
- (3) Had already given their pledge that the French fleet would not be given over to others.

(<sup>1</sup>) Not printed.



- (4) Asked the United States to remember that as regards operations against England, England had taken the initiative in an unexpected manner and had adopted an attitude hostile to France which could not be countenanced, by lending support to the rebels through her navy and air force.
- (5) Would not, in spite of the above, make any unjustified attack on Britain.

Reply concluded by saying that the French Government would see France's essential interests were honourably respected, were anxious to keep her traditional friendship with the United States and hoped to avoid the misunderstandings and misinterpretations which had led the President to send his message.

See my immediately following telegram (*q.v.*).

(32)

*Mr. Butler to Viscount Halifax.—(Received November 5.)*

(No. 2543.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Washington, November 4, 1940.*

MY immediately preceding telegram.

Chargé d'affaires comments were that a less brusque reply drafted by the Foreign Office had been turned down in favour of the joint production of Marshal Pétain and Laval.

He believed President's message had had a constructive effect in restraining French Government from proceeding further along the path of collaboration with Germany under pressure of threats directed against French prisoners. President's message had become known in fairly wide circles in Vichy and though it had caused resentment had given a wholesome shock, and that action taken as regards Martinique had brought home what the United States felt as regards the French Government's recently proclaimed policy of collaboration with Germany. These circles desired no further strain on Franco-American relations and even Laval was believed not to wish to burn his bridges. There was a dim realisation that in certain circumstances United States might still be France's only salvation. There was much feeling against the new policy and in favour of Britain and it would be very difficult for Vichy Government to run strongly counter to Britain and to known views of United States.

Chargé d'affaires favoured following up the present United States policy by a continuous series of reminders and warnings.

(33)

*Sir S. Hoare to Viscount Halifax.—(Received November 5.)*

(No. 966.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Madrid, November 5, 1940.*

YOUR telegram No. 986 (*q.v.*).

Naval attaché conveyed warning to French Naval Attaché last night. Details follow by bag.

(34)

*Sir S. Hoare to Viscount Halifax.—(Received November 8.)*

(No. 336. Saving.)  
(Telegraphic.) *En clair.*

*Madrid, November 5, 1940.*

MY telegram No. 966 (*q.v.*).

Naval attaché saw French Naval Attaché last night and gave him the warning in paraphrased form, but making all the points suggested in the three last paragraphs. The latter disclaimed all knowledge of any intention on the part of the French Government to move the ships as suggested, but did not try



to deny the possibility. Naval attaché's impression was that he knew something of the sort was contemplated. He asked the naval attaché to repeat the substance of the last paragraph, thought it over and said: "Do I understand that to mean, in polite language, that if they tried to come through the Straits you would not allow them to pass?" Naval attaché replied that he could put his own interpretation on it, but that he certainly took it to mean that. French Naval Attaché promised to inform Vichy at once.

(35)

*Viscount Halifax to Sir S. Hoare (Madrid).*

(No. 1021.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, November 7, 1940.*

YOUR telegram No. 958 (*q.v.*) [of 4th November: Conversation with French Ambassador regarding Vichy Government's intentions].

1. French Ambassador's suggestion that M. Laval's intention is to use the French fleet and certain military units for the purpose of recovering the French colonies that have declared for General de Gaulle is supported by information which has reached us from Tangier. This would face us with a most serious situation.

2. It would admirably suit the German and Italian book if the French fleet, acting on purely French business, should be brought into conflict with our own naval forces. We are under an obligation to de Gaulle to protect Free French territories from the sea to the best of our ability, having regard to the other calls upon our resources. We should, therefore, have to choose between resisting or leaving de Gaulle to the mercy of Vichy. We must do our best to avoid being placed before this choice.

3. Our policy towards France since the French concluded an armistice has of necessity been characterised by a certain duality. We were regretfully compelled to take action at Oran. We accepted General de Gaulle as the leader of all Free Frenchmen who rallied to him and supported the Allied cause. He was at that time the only French focus of resistance to Germany and Italy. We supported his action against certain French colonies with the object of organising resistance in France and the French Empire to German and Italian pressure. At the same time we have not desired to burn our boats with Vichy, and the twilight which has characterised our relationship with them has been maintained notwithstanding the operations at Oran and Dakar, and the application of our blockade, and it may well survive the warning we have given them about the *Jean Bart* and *Richelieu*, and the operation which General de Gaulle is now conducting in Gaboon. It could hardly survive a deliberate operation by Vichy to eliminate de Gaulle from Africa.

4. On the French side there has been a similar duality with a distinct leaning by the Government towards an arrangement with Germany, and a growing realisation by the people of the evils of German supremacy and of the possibility of a British victory. At the time of the armistice the Bordeaux Government no doubt expected that it would only be a matter of weeks before we were compelled to follow their example. They have been proved wrong, and, although they may not yet be convinced of our final victory, they probably wish to have some kind of reinsurance with us. At the same time they are in negotiation with the Germans on terms of which we have no precise knowledge, and we fear that the result, whatever it may be, is more likely than not to have the effect of hampering our prosecution of the war.

5. Pending the receipt of Vichy's reply to our request for their suggestions for a *modus vivendi*, which is much overdue, and a clarification of the position which may emerge from Marshal Pétain's reply to The King, only just received, I should be glad if you would discuss the position very frankly with the French Ambassador and ask him to make the following points to his Government:—

6. In the dark days which followed the armistice His Majesty's Government contracted certain obligations to General de Gaulle. Their sole object in doing so was to prevent German and Italian infiltration into the French Empire at a moment when the French Government appeared not to have sufficiently recovered from the shock of defeat to organise an adequate defence of the empire. We



have of late been much impressed by the growing strength of French feeling in favour of resistance to Germany and Italy, particularly in the empire, and we recognise that, so far, no part of the French Empire has passed into the hands of the enemy and that enemy infiltration has not, so far as our information goes, reached alarming proportions.

7. We cannot see the future at all clearly, but, if the Vichy Government can satisfy us that they are resolved and are able to defend French overseas territory against the Germans and the Italians and to take all measures to prevent its absorption by the enemy by subterranean means, no conflict need arise between us.

8. If we could be satisfied on this point, we should, for our part, be prepared to facilitate the task of the Vichy Government in organising such defence of the empire. If the French Government would refrain from attacking those territories which have in the main declared for de Gaulle (a course which must almost inevitably lead to direct conflict with ourselves), we would, on our side, refrain from undertaking any operation against Dakar so long as French Government undertake not to allow it to fall into enemy hands, and we are prepared to give French Government formal assurance in this sense, which we should hold binding unless action of French Government obliged us to give notice of change of attitude.

9. We would repeat that our aim is and always has been, when victory has been won, to ensure the restoration of France and the unity of her empire, including those territories which at present look to the Free French movement. We covet no inch of French territory for ourselves.

(Repeated to Washington, No. 2972.)

(36)

*Sir S. Hoare to Viscount Halifax.—(Received November 9.)*

(No. 987.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Madrid, November 8, 1940.*

MY telegram No. 336, Saving (*q.v.*).

French Naval Attaché informed Naval Attaché this morning that French Admiralty had no intention of moving either of these ships for repairs or completion, but that if they decided to do so, they would do so and His Majesty's Government should bear in mind that any interference would be regarded as aggression, and answered. He explained that the tone of this message was in part due to a bombing attack made on French submarine *Poncelet*, escorted by sloop *Bougainville*, in French territorial waters off French Congo on 4th November.

(37)

*Sir S. Hoare to Viscount Halifax.—(Received November 11.)*

(No. 999.)  
(Telegraphic.)

*Madrid, November 10, 1940.*

YOUR telegram No. 1021 (*q.v.*).

The Minister and I had three long talks with the French Chargé d'Affaires and second counsellor, the ambassador having excused himself owing to his not having presented his letters of credence. The chargé d'affaires insisted upon two contentions. Firstly, no French Government, in his view, could abandon the right to recover the mutinied colonies. Moreover, the undertaking suggested could be exploited by Germans as a breach of the armistice, under which the French Empire was to remain intact. Secondly, His Majesty's Government, having admitted their sole reason for supporting de Gaulle was to prevent German infiltration into the French Empire and that this infiltration had not, in fact, eventuated, had no advantage to gain by continuing their support of dissident colonies. They were only involving themselves in risk and trouble. The Minister and I argued with him at great length, pointing the impossibility of persistently repudiating de Gaulle and the fatal results of a clash between the two fleets. He



stuck, however, to his points, and all that I could do was to put into his head the idea of a start with economic discussions and a maintenance of the *status quo* in the meanwhile. I was careful not to pledge His Majesty's Government in any way to this suggestion, but I felt that I must try to break his rigid front in some way. The French Counsellor seemed to realise better the need for finding some practical way out of the *impasse*. I feel sure, however, that this is the point of view that Vichy will take, and I would ask you urgently to send me instructions as to how to deal with it. What, for instance, is your view about the start of economic talks if we could arrange them and a tacit agreement to keep things quiet in the meanwhile? I do not myself believe that we shall remove the danger of a *coup* by the French fleet unless we can give France, and even more so Morocco, economic help. When I asked the chargé d'affaires when we should receive an assurance to your suggestion of negotiations, he said that he had to-day received urgent message that delay was due to Laval's absence, and that we should receive it on his return.

2. French Chargé d'Affaires was evidently excited over fighting in Gaboon. Could you tell me what is happening there? He made much of the argument that de Gaulle had said that he would not shed French blood - I fear that this fighting, however justifiable it may be, will greatly prejudice settlement of any agreement with Vichy.

Chargé d'affaires, who had first argued against putting the points to Vichy, finally agreed to do so as a verbal communication of the views of His Majesty's Government.

4. Please do not think that, in putting these views before you, I am any less hostile to Laval or less favourable to de Gaulle than anyone in London.

---

(38)

*Viscount Halifax to Sir S. Hoare (Madrid).*

(No. 1051.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, November 12, 1940.*

YOUR telegram No. 999 (*q.v.*) [of 10th November: Relations with Vichy].

We are not asking the French Government to abandon the *right* to recover what they call the mutinied colonies. What we want is to avoid a clash between them and de Gaulle, since this would be almost certain to bring in its train a clash between them and us which would have incalculable consequences for the future of both our countries and might well be fatal to the best interests of both. What we suggest is not that the Vichy Government should formally undertake to recognise or acquiesce in the position established in these territories in Equatorial Africa, but that they should, in fact, refrain from attacking them. We quite understand how difficult it is for the Vichy Government to give us formal undertakings of any kind even on matters not covered by the provisions of the armistice (in which, however, we can find nothing which covers the present case). All we ask is that they should for the time being tacitly adopt the policy of refraining from active operations, since these, by bringing about hostilities between them and us, would end by bringing the Germans and Italians into French overseas territories and thus be fatal to the integrity of the French Empire which it is as much in our interests as in theirs to preserve.

2. The more it can be made plain to us that French North and West Africa and Syria will resist attack or infiltration by the Axis, the greater will be the prospect that the gap between these territories and the dissident colonies can be bridged. What we should hope for is a solution of this problem not by a conflict between Weygand and de Gaulle (which might bring everything to ruin), but such an evolution on the part of Weygand as would help us to bring de Gaulle to his standard. It is this that we shall work for, and this is the end that we are seeking in our present contacts with the Vichy Government and its agents.

3. That being so we should welcome the opening of economic talks subject to a tacit agreement to keep things quiet in the meantime; but we should, of course, want the Vichy Government to tell us first where they stand with Germany, as to which we have still had no reply to our question (my telegram No. 971) (*q.v.*).

4. A separate telegram is being sent to you about the Gaboon operations.

5. Meanwhile you should know that the Canadian Government are, with our entire approval, sending M. Dupuy, formerly Secretary of the Canadian



Legation in Paris, as chargé d'affaires to Vichy. M. Dupuy leaves by air via Lisbon on 13th November, when he will call on Sir W. Selby and will return to report after making a short stay at Vichy, where he has many acquaintances in Government and official quarters. He is fully acquainted with the latest developments in our relations with Vichy. As, however, he is travelling ostensibly on purely Canadian business, he thinks it better not to call on you *en route*.

(Repeated to Washington, No. 3025.)

(39)

*Sir S. Hoare to Viscount Halifax.—(Received November 13.)*

(No. 1011.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Madrid, November 11, 1940.*

MY telegram No. 888.<sup>(1)</sup>

French Chargé d'Affaires to-day handed me the following note:—

- (1) French Government draw attention to the fact that they have never taken the initiative in any attack against Great Britain and they take this opportunity of stating that they have no intention of taking any such initiative.
- (2) French Government must repeat their protest against assistance given by British naval and air armed forces to Frenchmen whom they have the right to consider as rebels against their country. They are obliged to state that they will endeavour to safeguard the unity of their Empire by every means in their power.
- (3) French Government have maintained full independent action and entire liberty as regards their decisions. Conversations which they have had with German Government do not in any way modify the position as stated above.
- (4) French Government note with satisfaction that maritime traffic is encountering no hindrance. They hope that no restrictive measures will be exercised by His Majesty's fleet against their ships which assure exclusively the provisioning of French civil population.

2. When he asked for my impressions, I told him that it seemed to me a most disappointing document. In particular I could not understand paragraph (4). For weeks past [? French Ambassador] had been suggesting to me the need for starting economic discussions owing to the very precarious state of French supplies. It now seemed that French Government were satisfied that at any moment French supplies could and would be held up. Chargé d'affaires asked me not to take reply too tragically. His Government were in a very difficult position. Their intentions were better than their written or spoken words. In his view paragraph (4) was the most important part of the document and if we were able to help the French Government economically there would be none of the incidents that might be possible under first three paragraphs. His personal view was that there would be great advantage in starting economic talks provided they were confidential and without prejudice. Even if they did not result in agreement, they would at least give a breathing [group omitted: ? space] during which it would be unlikely for incidents to take place. He felt very [? warmly] that such talks [? would have] some influence in preventing a serious reaction to the attack upon Libreville. I told him I would at once transmit the answer to His Majesty's Government and what he and I had said about it were [? confidential] comments that in no way bound our respective Governments.

(Copies sent to Mr. Loxley.)

<sup>(1)</sup> Not printed.



*Viscount Halifax to Sir S. Hoare (Madrid).*

(No. 1132.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, November 22, 1940.*

MY telegram No. 780 [of 23rd September: British service personnel in France].

Although we realise that further official representations to the Vichy Government on behalf of British service personnel in unoccupied France would serve no purpose at present, we think that there would be advantage to both sides in an exchange of British service personnel held in French African territories against French naval personnel who have surrendered to us as a result of warlike operations since the armistice.

2. The French hold at Dakar three officers and two ratings of the Fleet Air Arm (and possibly a sixth man whose name and rank are unknown) taken during the operations there; at Casablanca three non-commissioned officers of the Royal Air Force whose aeroplane was shot down off the Moroccan coast; and at Tunis three interned officers and seven non-commissioned officers of the Royal Air Force. We hold the crews of the French submarines *Ajax* and *Poncelet*, who surrendered to us at Dakar and off Libreville respectively. There are five officers and sixty-two ratings from the former at Gibraltar. The latter are at Lagos, but we have not exact figures.

3. In return for the release of the above-mentioned British service personnel we should be prepared to release an equivalent number of French naval personnel from the two submarines. But we insist on the exchange being effected on a man-for-man basis.

4. We are raising this matter independently of the suggestions which we have asked you to transmit to the French Government on behalf of General de Gaulle for the exchange of his own prisoners. Although the present proposals relate only to British personnel, we reserve all rights of associating ourselves later with General de Gaulle's exchange negotiations.

5. Please arrange for the above to be communicated at once to the Vichy Government. I leave it to your discretion whether to approach your French colleague or to instruct your naval attaché to raise the matter with the French Naval Attaché.

6. Full particulars of British officers and men follow by next bag.

*Viscount Halifax to Sir S. Hoare (Madrid).*

(No. 1133.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, November 21, 1940.*

MY telegram No. 1132 [of November: Exchange of service personnel].

Apart from the exchange of service personnel we are anxious to secure the early release of the British merchant seamen and other British subjects who are detained against their will in territory controlled by the Vichy Government.

2. The majority of the merchant seamen were held in North Africa, and the Vichy Government have undertaken to return them to Gibraltar, where they should arrive in a few days' time, but nine British members of the crew of the Yugoslav ship *Njegoss* are apparently being treated as military prisoners at Rufisque in Senegal. We have already approached Vichy about these through M. Chartier, and you will receive a copy of our note to him giving fuller details. We have not yet had a reply.

3. We attach importance to all British civilians in territory under Vichy control being allowed to leave without hindrance if they wish to do so. Some 200 civilians have been detained in unoccupied France on the ground that, as they are of military age, their departure would be contrary to the provisions of the armistice. We do not agree that the armistice terms bear such an interpretation, and we consider that British subjects should be allowed to leave unoccupied France and French overseas territories irrespective of their age.

4. Please arrange for a message in the above sense to be communicated to the Vichy Government through the most suitable channel.



5. For your own information : We propose to detain here those members of the French missions to whose release we have agreed in principle, and any other Frenchmen whose return is desired by the French Government, until the latter have given us satisfaction over our merchant seamen and civilians. We do not wish to say much to Vichy at this stage, but you should make it clear that we cannot be expected to be forthcoming in reply to the constant requests which we receive for exit permits, transit visas and other facilities for French citizens until the French Government show a more friendly spirit in dealing with similar requests from our side. You should also point out that the French Government are mistaken in thinking (as your naval attaché's signal 1020 of 22nd October suggests that they do), that we ever agreed to the unconditional release of any of the members of the French missions still detained here, although our treatment of the missions will naturally be influenced by the response to our present requests. You should, however, at no stage suggest that we could ever agree to release all the members of the mission, since certain of them must be detained indefinitely for reasons of security.

---

(42)

*Viscount Halifax to Sir S. Hoare (Madrid).*

(No. 1135.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, November 23, 1940.*

YOUR telegram No. 1011 (*q.v.*) [of 11th November : relations with Vichy].

I agree that the French reply is a most disappointing document. We are, however, unlikely in present circumstances to obtain anything satisfactory from Vichy on paper, or, indeed, anything which would be exposed to objection from the Germans.

2. Our attitude has been made quite clear in the various communications which we have made through you to the Vichy Government. Their replies have been tardy and equivocal. They have, however, assured us that they will make no unjustified attack on us and have declared their determination to retain control of their colonial empire and the fleet. All that we ask of them is that they should for the time being tacitly adopt a policy of refraining from active operations against the Free French colonies and that they will resist German or Italian attack on or infiltration into those territories which have remained loyal to the Vichy Government, and that they will effectively prevent their ports or territories being used as bases for air or U-boat attacks upon us.

3. On their side, His Majesty's Government declare that they do not covet or seek to acquire any French territory, and would indeed be prepared to help any French resistance to German or Italian designs to the best of their ability.

4. It is necessary, however, frankly to state that in the present circumstances if any part of the French empire should declare for General de Gaulle, His Majesty's Government would recognise its accession to his cause, and it would be covered by the undertaking already given to General de Gaulle to defend, from the sea, the territory under his control.

5. His Majesty's Government would recall that they have already declared their intention, when victory is achieved, of restoring the greatness and independence of France, and that this covers those parts of the empire which have declared or may declare for General de Gaulle.

6. The French Government will understand that the conditions outlined above would constitute merely a provisional arrangement whereby the situation might be held while means are sought of reaching a *modus vivendi*.

7. On this understanding, although we have not yet had a reply to our offer (see my telegram No. 824 of 3rd October) (*q.v.*) to examine any concrete proposals which the French Government might wish to put forward, His Majesty's Government are prepared to begin economic discussions with the Vichy Government, trade between French North Africa and ports in unoccupied France being first reviewed. His Majesty's Government would suggest that the discussions should take place at Madrid. If the Vichy Government will send a representative to Madrid to discuss economic matters we shall be happy to send a representative from this country to meet him.

(Repeated to Washington, No. 3146, and Tangier, No. 346.)



*Viscount Halifax to Sir S. Hoare (Madrid).*

(No. 1155.)

(Telegraphic.)

(Personal and most secret.)

*Foreign Office, November 23, 1940.*

FOLLOWING is for your own information :—

President Roosevelt instructed United States Chargé d'Affaires at Vichy to obtain a confirmation or a denial of the report of the possible transfer of the *Jean Bart* and the *Richelieu* to the Mediterranean for completion. Chargé d'Affaires was to point out that it was a vital interest to the United States Government that these vessels remained in stations where they would not be exposed to control or seizure by a Power which might employ them to ends in conflict with the interests of the United States and the future of the French fleet. If the report was confirmed, the chargé d'affaires was to make it clear that such a step on the part of the French Government would inevitably seriously prejudice Franco-American relations.

2. In replying to the above representations, Marshal Pétain made a statement the text of which is approximately as follows :—

“ The most solemn assurances have been given by me that the French fleet, including these two ships, shall never fall into the hands of Germany. Those assurances I have given to your Government: I have given them to the British Government and even to the Prime Minister himself. Again I reiterate them. These ships will be used to defend the possessions and territories of France. Unless we are attacked by the British, they will never be used against England. Even if I wanted to, I cannot sell those ships. It is impossible under the terms of the armistice, and even if it were possible, it would never be permitted by the Germans. France is under Germany's heel and impotent. I would gladly sell them, if I were free, on condition that they be returned to us after the war and save them for France in this way. I must repeat, I have neither the right nor the possibility of selling them under present circumstances.”

*The Marquess of Lothian to Viscount Halifax.—(Received November 28.)*

(No. 2825. Secret.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Washington, November 27, 1940.*

MY telegram No. 2745.<sup>(1)</sup>

Under-Secretary of State told me yesterday that in recent exchanges between the President and Marshal Pétain the latter had given undertaking that he would not move the two French battleships without first informing United States Government.

(<sup>1</sup>) Not printed.

*Sir S. Hoare to Viscount Halifax.—(Received November 30.)*

(No. 1151.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Madrid, November 30, 1940.*

YOUR telegrams Nos. 1135 (*q.v.*) and 1169.<sup>(1)</sup>

I yesterday carried out your instructions and left with the French Ambassador an aide-mémoire to this effect. I took the opportunity of saying to him that

(<sup>1</sup>) Not printed.



blockade was still in force, and that at any moment we might hold up French ships. He said that he understood the position, but hoped that, if economic discussions began, we should avoid the holding up of French ships during their continuance. I said I would put this point to His Majesty's Government. He evidently wished that Vichy would agree to discussions at Madrid.

(46)

*Sir W. Selby to Viscount Halifax.—(Received December 9.)*

(No. 903.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Lisbon, December 7, 1940.*

DR. SALAZAR told me this afternoon that he had received a letter from the Portuguese Chargé d'Affaires at Vichy, dated 1st December, who had seen M. Baudouin. Following is substance of letter :—

M. Baudouin had said that the British must have confidence in Marshal Pétain and judge the situation by facts and not by casual information which might reach them. The marshal was fully aware of the side on which the interests of France lay. French Government had no intention of submitting to any aggression, least of all as regards Dakar, and this also applied to Germany, but that their resources in that quarter were limited. She would resist any aggression from any quarter whatsoever with all her power. As regards refraining from attacking colonies under the orders of de Gaulle, French Government were ready to give every guarantee that they had no such intention, but that they would endeavour by propaganda to rally opinion in those colonies to the cause of Marshal Pétain.

3. There were no agreements of any kind with Germany, and for this reason it was not possible to ascertain the views of His Majesty's Government as regards the position in which the French Government finds itself as regards French territories in German occupation. French Government will not cede naval bases, fleet, &c., for use against England.

4. Dr. Salazar, in making this communication, seemed to think that last undertaking was important, and begged that I would make the communication to His Majesty's Government immediately.

(Repeated to Madrid, No. 249.)

(47)

*Sir S. Hoare to Viscount Halifax.—(Received December 11.)*

(No. 1213.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Madrid, December 11, 1940.*

DUPUY<sup>(1)</sup> leaves Lisbon by air on Friday with much detailed and important information about Vichy. Pending his arrival following points may be useful to you :—

- (1) In his opinion Pétain is genuinely anxious for a British victory.
- (2) Minister of War, who now has great influence, is definitely pro-British and is secretly organising Fifth Column activities.
- (3) Minister of Marine, though greatly incensed against the British, gave a definite assurance in the presence of Pétain that French fleet would not become embroiled with British fleet, and in particular would not attack French colonies. [? Main] operation against them would be a land operation, and certainly would not take place before February, if then.

(1) The former Secretary of the Canadian Legation in Paris, who had been appointed Chargé d'Affaires to the French, Netherlands and Belgian Governments, and visited Vichy in that capacity in November.



- (4) Laval, though detested by everyone, is regarded as a necessary lightning conductor to protect France against total German occupation.
- (5) It was general view that de Gaulle should be fighting the Italians rather than Frenchmen, and that, if his army went to Egypt, France would generally approve his action and French unity of front might be recreated.
- (6) It is inevitable that, outwardly at least, an existence of tension should continue between the British and French Governments. If it looked as if we were working together, Germany would intervene. Behind, however, this outward tension, France is praying for a British victory. It is, however, essential to move with great caution and to avoid premature action.
- (7) French will be greatly impressed by American effort to help Greece. The more that it can be emphasised on the British wireless in French the better.

(48)

*Viscount Halifax to Sir N. Charles (Lisbon).*

(No. 997. Secret.)

(Telegraphic.)

*Foreign Office, December 17, 1940.*

SIR W. SELBY'S telegram No. 903 [of 7th December: Report of M. Baudouin's views].

Please thank Dr. Salazar for this interesting report. You may tell him, in confidence, that we have since received through Mr. Dupuy, the Canadian Chargé d'Affaires at Vichy, and through other channels assurances from Marshal Pétain to a similar effect.

(Repeated to Madrid, No. 1302.)

(49)

*The Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the United Kingdom High Commissioners in Canada, Commonwealth of Australia, New Zealand and the Union of South Africa.*

(Z. No. 420. Most Secret.)

(Telegraphic.)

*December 21, 1940.*

PLEASE give following message to Prime Minister for his most secret and personal information with reference to my telegram M. No. 98<sup>(1)</sup> of 26th November and previous telegrams regarding our relations with the Vichy Government:—

*Begins:* We have received assurances in writing from the Vichy Government that they are determined to retain control of their Colonial Empire and fleet and that they will not take the initiative in attacking us (see my telegram Z. No. 307<sup>(1)</sup>). It may be difficult for them to go beyond this on paper since they must be careful in their correspondence to avoid rousing German suspicions. There have, however, been two valuable personal contacts with Vichy. The first came to London in October as an emissary of Marshal Pétain, and has since conveyed our views to the marshal; more recently M. Dupuy has been in Vichy for a fortnight as Canadian Chargé d'Affaires and is now in London.

Marshal Pétain's emissary has now informed us that the marshal has given the following assurances:—

- (1) France will sign no separate peace with the Axis before the termination of hostilities between the British Empire and Germany.
- (2) France will not cede air or naval bases or the French Fleet to the Axis Powers, and will resist by force of arms in North Africa any attempt on the part of the Spaniards, Germans or Italians to seize her colonies.

(<sup>1</sup>) Not printed.



- (3) France accepts the submission of French Equatorial Africa to General de Gaulle as a *fait accompli* up to the termination of hostilities, it being understood that French Equatorial Africa will then be restored to France and that no new enterprise will be directed against French West Africa, Morocco and North Africa. (It will be noted that this assurance, by recognising the existing position in Equatorial Africa, goes further than we asked (see paragraph (3) of my telegram M. No. 98<sup>(1)</sup>)).

M. Dupuy, the Canadian Chargé d'Affaires, had certain important conversations with Marshal Pétain, on which he is reporting to his Government early next week. It is hoped that it will be possible for a summary of his report to be telegraphed later.

We are now considering the situation in the light of the above information.

(<sup>1</sup>) Not printed.